DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 759 HE 015 111

AUTHOR Black, Charlene Rushton
TITLE The Challenge of the Classroom: A Political-Economy Perspective.
PUB DATE 23 Aug 81
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (Toronto, Canada, August 23, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; *College Environment; College Role; *Economic Factors; Educational Benefits; Higher Education; Instructional Improvement; *Political Influences; Student Attitudes; *Student Characteristics; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Effectiveness; Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

Societal and political and economic forces that affect college instruction are considered. Classroom interaction is affected by the culture, the personalities of teachers and students, and the social situation (the physical and social environment). All the factors that influence the classroom are affected by political and economic factors both internal and external to it. The culture consists of the external norms, value, and beliefs about higher education in general and teaching/learning within colleges and universities and the internal norms, values and beliefs about the specific course. Economic forces (e.g., resource allocation) also affect the culture of student-teacher interaction. Teacher characteristics that influence classroom interaction include motivation, availability of time and energy, prior training and competence in the subject matter, and personal attributes. Examples of political and economic forces that affect teachers are the reward structure of their institutions, student reactions, and workload. Student characteristics that influence classroom interaction include the students' motivation and goals, prior training and skill, learning style, perceptions of the instructor's expectations and requirements, time and energy and personal attributes. The social situation indicates whether an institution is public or private, which affects the kind and amount of resources at its disposal. Institutions establish their own set of norms that may be a function of political and economic forces. The general economic situation and job market may encourage some students to attend college. Individual and collective efforts that may help improve teaching and learning are addressed. (SW)

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The Challenge of the Classroom: A Political-Economy Perspective*

Charlene Rushton Black
Georgia Southern College

Surviving the Eighties may become the dominant theme or overriding priority for academic institutions in this decade as the combination of rising costs and skrinking enrollments spell trouble for even the strongest academic institutions in the decade ahead. Higher education in the United States, after a century of gradual and then rapid expansion, must now anticipate several decades of no growth or even decline. Some well-established institutions will adjust to this steady or declining state with only minor difficulties but others may experience such travail as to have their very existence seriously jeopardized.

A number of factors appear to be positively related to the survival and vitality of American colleges and universities. Among the factors contributing to longevity, being a public institution helps. States having a vested interest in their institutions simply do not allow them to die. Almost as important to institutional viability as public sponsorship is the existence of a consistent constituency large enough to generate the needed students and resources essential for survival. Related to the factor of constituency is the location of an institution in a state or region that is heavily populated and growing. Possession of a reasonable endowment is another obvious factor and there is luck or the power of historical accident.

By contrast, four types of institutions will face the most serious problems during the 1980's, assuming the market for new students proves to be limited: (1) the small, little-known liberal arts college, (2) the private, single-sex two year institution, (3) the small recently created

*Paper presented at the Section on Undergraduate Education: Approaches to Undergraduate Sociology Education at the American Sociological Association Meetings, August 23, 1981, Toronto, Canada. The author welcomes comments and questions which should be addressed to her at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology; Georgia Southern College; Statesboro, Georgia 30460.

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private institution designed to serve a quite specific clientele, and (4) the middle-level, private, urban universities. The problems are likely to extend from maintaining a precarious existence produced by enrollment declines, rising costs, and tuitions that have come to be regarded too high for values received, to a final death struggle characterized by exhausted reserves, no line of credit with banks, and a flow of cash so limited that bills cannot be paid. Some of the factors may be impossible to change, others may be addressed through the implementation of survival strategies.

A variety of prescriptions for collegiate institutional good health during the 1980s and 1990s have been proposed. Suggestions for radical changed from traditional practices have been offered from so-called experts. Some prescribe the rapid entry into many new programs for many new kinds of students. This solution may help a college prosper for a time, but may then gradually erode the image of the institution and its long-term resources. Others advocate the adoption of a complex new curriculum, such as a competency-based curriculum requiring major modification in how faculty members use their time. Such change may generate off-campus interest and even considerable foundation support but, at the same time, leave both faculty members and students confused and with sharply mixed feelings. Similarly creating a complicated new institution that focuses, say, on the environment and employs new nomenclature to establish a break with tradition may attract international attention and applications from unique kinds of individuals but fail to attract those students the institution was created to serve. Other prescriptions result in radical shifts in administration and governance - such as eliminating departments, asking the total faculty to decide in detail such complex matters

as faculty policy, or adopting a stylized, complex system of planning - may have visual appeal yet break down. Most of these suggestions for radical changes from traditional practices are likely to prove counter-productive in the long run.

What does seem to emerge from a study of colleges and universities is that central element to institutional health is the undergraduate educational program. While it is quite appropriate for institutions to undertake, within definite constraints, some programs and activities peripheral to its central task the essence of the vast majority of collegiate institutions should be its core undergraduate programs. It is the program that contributes most the institution's saga or charter and exerts the continuing attraction of the institution over generations.

Yet the essence of formal undergraduate education is the interaction of young men and women with each other and with some significant teacher through words, numbers, and concepts in the belief that such interactions will produce changes in how they view themselves and the world. This interaction between teacher and student and between student and student occurs most often in microcosm of the classroom and is played out against the larger backdrop of the institutional setting (the college or university) and the societal context. Thus the challenge of the 80's may well be the challenge of the classroom, the focal point or arena of the undergraduate program.

Classroom interaction is affected by the same major categories of variables which influence all types of human behavior: the culture (norms, values and beliefs which apply to this interaction), the personalities of the participants (teacher(s), and students), and the social situation (the physical and social environment) in which the interaction occurs. Each of these major categories contains a number of variables which interact to produce student-learning

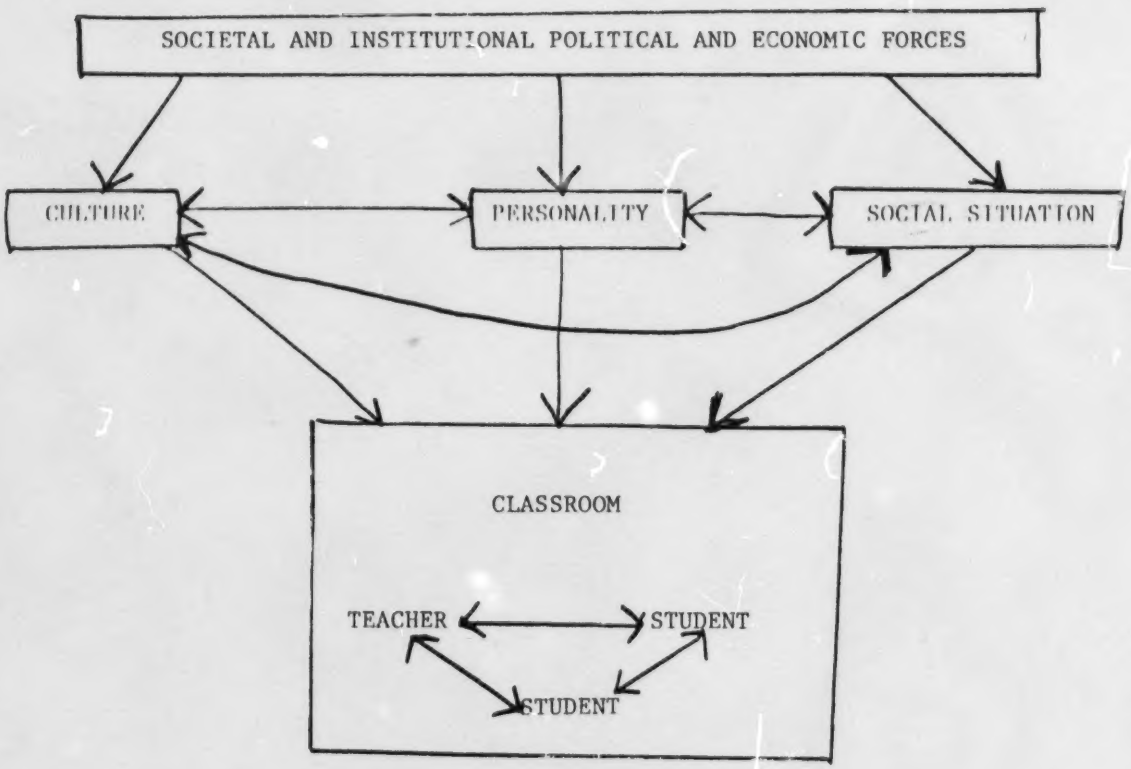

Figure 1. The Challenge of the Classroom: A Political-Economy Perspective

outcomes. Each category of variables and thus, in turn, each individual variable is influenced by political and economic forces both internal and external to this arena of the classroom.

If teachers are to face the challenge of the 80's in the classroom and survive, we must focus on these forces so that we may achieve the excellence in the classroom instruction which will result in quality student learning outcomes.

The culture consists of the external norms, values, and beliefs about higher education in general and teaching-learning within colleges and universities in particular and the internal norms, values and beliefs about the specific course and teaching-learning as it relates to their particular classroom. The external culture as it impinges upon classroom interaction contains beliefs about the purpose and value of a college education. When the college diploma is viewed as an end rather than as a means to an end, it has quite different implications for student-teacher interaction. Likewise when the cultural definition of the value of a college degree changes then student-teacher interaction may also shift. Perhaps viewing each course as a hurdle to be leaped in the process of completing the obstacle course entitled college education places student and teacher in an adversary relationship in which one party is trying to lower the hurdle while the other party is seeking to raise it. The cultural myths surrounding teaching as something one does when she cannot perform the task itself contributes to a general devaluation of the teaching-learning process. The belief that teaching is an art rather than a science likewise contributes to the notion that few individuals can expect to be good teachers since we were not born that way and to student expectations that the class will be boring and therefore useless since there are few good teachers.

Economic forces also affect the culture of student-teacher interaction. When the public's perceived value of a college education is low, often education

is given low priority in budget allocations. Legislatives frequently place education at the bottom of the funding totem pole, thereby limiting the resources which are available in the classroom and to its individual members. These resources can include external ones such as the library, media, or personnel, and internal ones such as personnel or supplies.

Internally the classroom has its own rules for behavior and beliefs about the role of student and teacher. These develop from cultural and institutional definitions about education and teacher-student interaction. A rule about mandatory class attendance develops from certain beliefs about college students which includes adult status and responsibility. The structure of the classroom also reflects the culture.

A second category of variables is the personalities of the participants in the interaction. Teachers and students bring their own sets of personal characteristics, motivations, and teaching and learning styles.

Teacher characteristics which influence classroom interaction include motivation, availability of time and energy to commit to the teaching process, prior training and competency in the subject matter, teaching skill including clarity of communication, instructional method/teaching style, and personal attributes such as age, sex, race. Political and economic forces both external and internal to the classrooms affect this set of teacher characteristics. Perhaps the most important factor affecting the motivation of faculty members is the reward structure of their institutions. If faculty members are to give undergraduate teaching a high priority in their scale of values, if they are to devote a considerable portion of their time to teaching and students, and if they are to derive satisfaction which sustain them, there must be a visible structure of rewards for such efforts. Consequently, the individual teacher's motivation, which some assume to be a personal characteristic, is most vulnerable

to the force of political and economic factors. The reward structure of any institution includes both extrinsic rewards and provisions for deriving intrinsic satisfactions. Extrinsic rewards such as salary increases, promotions, and tenure are most visibly affected by political and economic factors. The most external economic factor affecting the extrinsic reward structure is the general state of both public and private institutions of higher education. But the political process most directly affects the allocation process. When institutions are funded on an individual basis rather as part of a statewide system of institutions the decision becomes a political one influenced by alumni and supporters of the various institutions. Boards of Regents or Trustees are also subject to political whims and alliances. In fact, in periods of scarcity as we are now experiencing, these external political alliances may become more critical. Within institutions the same forces are at work in the distribution of funds for salary increases and in promotion and tenure decisions. The debate concerning the differential rewarding of teaching, research, and public service is frequently a political one. Even after the criteria are established and an institution makes a commitment to reward good teaching the power structure may consider teaching certain disciplines to be more valuable than teaching other disciplines.

Within the classroom the teacher's motivation may be influenced by her perception of students' ability to reward good teaching, either extrinsically or intrinsically. When student evaluations are used as a basis for the teacher's salary increase, promotion, and tenure then the students control more political power to reward or punish teachers and to influence the teaching-learning process. While many would challenge the merits of such a system, they can not deny some of its consequences. Students as a major source of intrinsic rewards affect the teacher's motivation. Every teacher can testify to the satisfaction which derives from the knowledge, vitality and reinforcement which students can provide.

Even the most highly motivated teacher must have time and energy to devote to pursuing excellence in teaching. Numerous political and economic factors define the teacher's workload. External political decisions often determine the type of institution definitions of appropriate teaching hours for each type of institution, the hours of committee work devoted to self-study, develop five year plans, or implement affirmative action. Allocation of funds for personnel affect workload and when budget cuts are made the potential workload of each faculty member may be altered significantly. Institutional political decisions such as assignment of instructors to advise students organizations or serve as academic advisors reduce the number of hours which can be devoted to classroom teaching. Hours spent in department or college governance is time diverted from teaching activities. But the instructor does not refuse the president's appointment to serve on one or more committees or task force. Decisions to reassign faculty to administrative positions may increase workload for other instructors, while allocation of funds to hire additional personnel also influences the time and energy available for classroom instruction. Time and energy available for a particular class may also be a function

of the other courses which one is teaching. Certainly preparing and developing three sections of introductory sociology are not the equivalent of preparing and teaching three different courses.

Within the classroom the time and energy devoted to teaching may be affected by the amount of outside assistance required by the students enrolled in the course. The ability level and amount of prior preparation may increase or decrease the time the instructor has to devote to the classroom. While teaching-learning are occuring in both settings the balance of time devoted to the classroom instruction may vary and alter interaction patterns with some if not all of the students.

Classroom interaction is also affected by the teacher's prior training and competency in the subject matter. While no administrators would prefer to assign instructors to teach subjects in which they have little knowledge or experience, political and economic factors frequently contribute to this arrangement. Consider the faculty member who at long last receives a well deserved sabbatical and for whom no suitable replacement can be found. Who teachers her courses? Someone is assigned to the task. Sometimes sabbatical are given without funds to replace an individual or a faculty member is reassigned to an administrative task and other department members must "pick up the slack." Certainly the classroom interaction is affected significantly by such a turn of events.

Teaching skills including clarity of communication directly impact classroom interaction. Most teachers receive little or no training on how to be a teacher. External political and economic forces have contributed to this deficit. The cultural myths surrounding teaching training as part of a graduate program in sociology, rather than provide training opportunities most graduate education reinforces the myth that good teaching is an art

rather than a science and that teaching a subject matter requires only that one know it. Post graduate opportunities to acquire these skills are subject to political and economic constraints set by funding agencies. Institutions may encourage faculty members to acquire these skills by providing funds to sponsor workshops, rewarding participation, and granting release time.

Within the classroom the teacher's skills may be influenced by the students' responses and their power to evaluate the instructor. The more weight given to student evaluations in promotion and tenure decisions the greater the students' power.

The teacher's style/role is another factor in classroom interaction. Some teachers define their tasks as instruction or the imparting of knowledge or skill while others view their role as the facilitation of change and learning. These perspectives lead to quite different types of classroom interaction. Prior training and experience contribute to one's perspective of the teacher's role. Political and economic factors which influence these factors have been discussed previously.

Personal attributes of the instructor such as age, sex, and race also influence the interaction process. Who is assigned to teach a course may be a result of political and economic factors operating at the institutional or departmental level. Decisions to reassign faculty to administrative positions may alter radically the teaching assignments of other personnel. The necessity of adding emphases or programs affects the instructor's course assignments. Within the course these factors work to alter classroom interaction. Sources of information may add or detract from the credibility of the subject matter. As one sex is perceived as more empathetic or authoritarian than another teacher-student interaction is altered. Students with high need for affiliation respond better and learn more in a supportive atmosphere.

Student characteristics which influence classroom interaction include the students' motivation and goals, prior training and skill, learning style, perceptions of the instructor's expectations and requirements, time and energy, and personal attributes.

Students' motivation to maximize learning outcomes may depend upon their perception of the value of a college education. Students who view it as a means to an end and who define the sheepskin as a ticket into the job market may display a lower level of motivation than those who view education as a learning process. When the students' questions center on "Is this going to be on the test" it certainly influences student-teacher interaction. If what is important is only that which will reappear on test day, then student learning outcomes are minimized rather than maximized. These motivations are significantly affected by the culture as discussed above.

The students' goals for a particular course should influence the instructor's objectives for the course and the more closely they mesh the more positive each may feel about the end product. When students are asked the question "what do you expect to get out of this course (other than a grade), many of them give no response - that is their goal, pure and simple. Others respond either in generalities or specific job skills, again reflecting cultural definitions.

Prior training and skills is affected by a variety of political and economic factors. The current egalitarian deal in American higher education has fostered the view of education as the means for social and economic upward mobility. Access to higher education is viewed as a right and financial resources for college attendance have come to be viewed as a national entitlement. Spiraling inflation and declining college age populations are economic forces which may serve to lower admissions standards. College admissions policies may reflect

this political philosophy and economic reality resulting in an influx of students lacking the skills necessary to master course work. How does the instructor respond to this new contingent of students? Should instructional objectives and standards be lowered to accommodate these students? How does one teach when students can neither read nor write? This problem can be particularly disturbing to the sociology instructor on a campus where sociology is viewed in the manner described above as "just common sense" or an easy course. Faced with the necessity of placing their students in at least one course for academic credit, advisors in special studies programs often suggest sociology for these reasons.

The great range of prior training and skill presents an oncoming challenge to the instructor who now can make fewer and fewer assumptions about homogeneity even with regard to the most basic experiences. In a senior level course, it would seem safe to assume that all students have written a term paper, after all, it was a requirement in freshmen English and students are supposed to have completed freshman English by the time they reach junior status. However, as increasing portions of the upper classes are composed of transfer students it may no longer be valid to make such assumptions. Decisions made by instructors in other institutions and in other departments represent political decisions affecting the student-teacher interaction in the individual instructor's classroom.

Alliances made with other departments which may require or "strongly recomment" that their majors take certain courses affect class composition. Decisions related to the development of the core curriculum requiring certain courses or narrowing options are clearly reflected in class make-up. Sometimes external political forces may set course requirements such as a legislature mandating a political science course for all graduates of public institutions

or a board of trustees requiring introductory sociology. Competition for students, often reflected in departmental schedules, represents another economic force which shapes student enrollments.

Student learning styles are also critical factors in the teaching-learning process. Some students prefer autonomy and respond well to a teaching strategy which demands self-direction. Others survive better when the situation calls for little self-direction with the teacher maintaining control, providing a highly structured environment. Student learning styles are largely the result of prior training and are impacted by the political and economic forces described above.

Students' perceptions of the instructor's expectations and requirements certainly influence the classroom interaction. Whether the amount of work required is in line with the amount of credit received is a question to be answered in light of the cultural definitions and norms. Does the teacher lower expectations for performance, alter out-of-class assignments or pretend the conflicts don't exist?

Personal attributes of the students such as age, sex, race, social class and past experiences influence the classroom interaction process. The political and economic factors which influence admissions policies and financial assistance can not be ignored here. Also the more closely the personal attributes of the teacher match those of the student the more likely they are to share common definitions of the situation. These personal characteristics also represent resources which can be used in the teaching-learning process and thus are internal economic factors. Students who have prior work experience can add much to the class. Older students can share valuable insights with others. Consider the resource I discovered in my culture and personality class when I learned that two of my students were children of missionaries and were living/visiting the U.S. for the first time in their lives.

The social situation, both the physical and social environment in which the behavior occurs is the third category of factors influencing classroom interaction. Whether an institution is public or private may influence the chances of survival and the kind and amount of resources at its disposal. Institutions establish their own set of norms which may be a function of political and economic forces. Decisions concerning the location and size of colleges and the authorization of new programs often are made on the basis of politics. The home town of a congressman may become the location of a college. Institutions may lobby against the approval of a new program for a competing institution thereby affecting the size and programs of both institutions. Institutions have their own philosophies and functions which may impact the classroom. Public institutions frequently reflect the current egalitarian ideal in American higher education which views access to higher education as a right. Other institutions perceive their role as service to a state or region and strongly encourage the development of courses which provide service to particular clientele. In such an environment, students may become the plane labor fulfilling some administrator's dream.

Some administrations seeking more standardization and control may issue mandates which directly impact classroom instruction. Consider the vice president who requires that all instructors administer a final examination at a specified time and place and of a specified length. The stated objectives of all courses do not lend themselves to standard examinations and students and teacher find themselves bound by one more artificial constraint interaction.

Departmental political decisions could specify certain kinds of evaluations or standardized exams which could significantly impact course objectives, teaching strategies, and teacher-student interaction.

Likewise a classroom possesses its own set of characteristics. Class size, a critical variable in the teaching-learning process, is highly susceptible

to political and economic forces. While the importance of class size may vary with educational goals, its influence of teacher-student and student interaction can not be underestimated. Political factors which affect the characteristics of student populations as stated above influence the size of the student body and indirectly class size. When legal decisions and public opinion pressed for Affirmative Action and EEO officers on college campuses and additional funds were not forthcoming, many institutions were forced to reassign faculty to fill these positions. This reduction in faculty frequently led to increased class size.

The general economic situation and the lack of job opportunities may encourage some students to attend college. External funding for grants and other projects may release some faculty from teaching and increase the class size of others. Within the institution, higher student-faculty ratios may be established as a means to combat spiraling instructional costs. Faced with the need to increase EFT so that he may secure more funds, a department head may increase class size. Each of these decisions would significantly impact the teaching-learning process.

Classrooms also have their own atmosphere which might be classified as friendly vs. aloof, cooperative vs. competitive, calm vs. excited, stable vs. flexible, warm vs. cold, etc. These factors interact with the student and teacher characteristics discussed above to directly affect the teaching-learning process. Anxious students, for instance, do better when given fewer demands for self-direction or independent thinking. Students with high conceptual levels perform best with low structure while those with low conceptual level are benefitted by greater degrees of structure.

The arrangement of physical space is another factor affecting student-teacher interaction. One can not underestimate the constraints imposed by

chairs which are bolted to the floor. Try to have small group discussions in such an environment. Or imagine teaching in rooms which were designed to be chemistry laboratories or journalism classrooms. The biggest hazard faced in one of my recent classes was electric outlets which were raised three inches from the floor and which had been installed for the typewriters which had formerly occupied the room. I think my students placed bets as to when and how many times I would stumble over them each class period. Again the assignment of facilities to departments and to classes within departments reflects the workings of the most intricate political manners.

Another factor in the environment is the availability of resources which directly impacts the selection of instructional techniques. Many of the non-lecture teaching methods require resources which often are not available. The political and economic decisions which affect the reward structure of the teacher also serve to limit the resources available for equipment and supply purchases. It is difficult to conduct simulations without the aid of some materials. Another important resource is the graduate assistant whose time and energy may be utilized to lead small group discussions, supervise field trips, or conduct experiments. Political decisions regarding the allocation of this valuable resource can be critical. The graduate dean's assignment of these students to departments may fluctuate yearly and the department head's judgment of the best utilization of their energies is subject to many political overtones. Budget allocations within the institutions may alter the number of graduate assistants. A decision to increase the stipend without allocating additional funds for the program has serious consequences for instructors whose teaching techniques require the use of a teaching assistant.

While this application of the political-economy perspective to classroom interaction has not been exhaustive it has served to demonstrate that political and economic factors do impact what occurs in the classroom. If we as teachers are to survive the 80's we must face the challenges of the classroom. The major challenge is to maximize student learning outcomes. The teaching-learning process (teacher-student interaction) is directly affected by the culture, the personalities of the participants, and the social situation in which the behavior occurs and as this paper suggests these factors are affected by political and economic forces both outside and inside the classroom.

Perhaps the real challenge becomes recognition of and intervention in the forces which affect these factors.

Some of the issues raised in this paper can be addressed by individual efforts. The individual instructor may make a commitment to pursue excellence in teaching and work to develop personal strategies to improve the teaching-learning process. The individual instructor may seek to change cultural definitions about the values of a college education and she may establish norms for her individual classroom. She may change the cultural perspective of sociology by helping students appreciate its relevancy. Introductory sociology students are a prime target for these efforts since this course may be their only contact with sociology and these students will be the future political and business leaders of the U.S. She may even affect the characteristics of the participants by altering her own teaching styles or increasing the time available to devote to teaching by relinquishing even more of her precious leisure time. She may even alter the characteristics of her students through selective recruitment. Some sociologists have suggested that this may well be the best way to issue successful outcomes. Indeed I have significantly increased the sex ratio of my classes by asking students to recruit males for my sociology

of sex roles class. The individual instructor may work to improve classroom atmosphere and even negotiate for a better classroom location.

While these efforts might produce some short range benefits they have little long-term effects. Ultimately, the challenge of the classroom must be met by a mobilization directed toward the institutional and societal context of teaching. We must recognize that these issues are not unique to sociology and join forces with colleagues who share these same concerns.

At the institutional level we must become more involved in the decision-making process. We must adopt a professional model for dealing with the bureaucratic structures in which we teach. Many of us view committee assignments with disdain, and they do siphon energy and time from teaching. Committee work, administrative assignments and dealing with the bureaucracy are not the inspiring aspects of college teaching, but they are a necessary evil. While college and university senates are not always inspiring bodies, their presence is justified as democracy is justified by its being better than other alternatives. Either the teacher serves as a responsible citizen or someone else makes the decisions. Many of the political decisions discussed in this paper could have had different outcomes if persons committed to excellence in teaching had been involved in the decision-making process or had raised the consciousness of those who were.

Institutional economic processes are also amenable to change. But emphasis on and support for teaching will not occur unless we work to make it happen. Alumni foundations will not divert monies from athletics unless urged to do so. Faculty involvement can lead to allocations for faculty development programs and teaching sabbaticals. Most administrators have discretionary funds that could be used to support innovative teaching techniques but they will not be so allocated unless faculty request them. After a three-year effort faculty

development is now a concern which is built into the statues of my own institution with a budget allocation of its own.

As stated earlier the reward structure is the single most important important influence on faculty motivation and thus strongly affects teaching performance. Often teaching is given lip service but not rewarded. Internally a better reward system rests upon a responsible and enlightened faculty. Such an obvious ill as publish or perish is not imposed solely from outside the institution. Outsiders are not spawning the journals and voting on promotions. Faculty are. On most tenure and promotion committees there is one person who always will vote for teaching to receive top priority, three or four persons who will vote for research and publication always and five or six who would vote for teaching if they thought others would. Individual interviews with members of tenure and promotion committees reveal that the majority think teaching should be given more consideration but they think they are alone in this belief. Thus they don't speak up at the meetings (Mauksch, 1979). We need to seek out and give support to those who would vote to reward teaching if encouraged. We also need to become more systematic in our evaluation of teaching so that we may reward it more fully.

The political and economic forces operating at the societal level also deserve our attention. The stark reality is that major decisions for education are more often than not dictated by political and economic concerns, not educational ones. The strategy for change must be the politicalization of not only sociologists but all teachers. "eeting the challenge of the classroom depends upon collective action and the extent to which teachers are willing to give primacy to student learning outcomes - the end product in the educational process.

Teachers must become political in orientation and view themselves as a status group within the society. A minimum effort would be more attention to the political structure and the vital issues directly affecting education, both public and private. In his book, The Politics of Higher Education, John Millett, Chancellor of the Ohio System, reports that he could find little support among faculty for the establishment of political clout. Most faculty were not interested in mutual activity and united support of a political leader. He observed no common interest in higher education, no sense of cohesion. They were not organized in any way to exercise influence upon the political process (Millett, 1974). We must overcome our past reluctance to influence the societal context of teaching - our survival in the 80's depends on it.

Whether we teach at private or public institutions the larger society affects the resources available for education. We need to emphasize the role and value of sociology and let the voice of teachers be heard. This means we need to present our case to those persons who make decisions affecting educational policy. We need a better means of interpreting our program. When presenting the budget to the legislature in one state, the higher education system's representative referred to professional journals as the magazines in the library. How clear is the funders' view of the teaching process?

We may not be able to alter the general state of our economy but we could work to change views of higher education and thus enhance its position in funding priorities.

Our course of action then must be both individual and collective. As individuals we can become more committed to the pursuit of excellence in teaching. Collectively we must work to alter the political and economic forces which influence the teaching-learning process.

Thus the ASA Section on Undergraduate Education must play a dual role - it must continue its efforts to increase individual commitment and enhance teaching skills but it should also provide leadership in addressing the larger issues which threaten our very existence. For only through individual commitment and collective action can we meet the challenge of the classroom in the 80's.

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